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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
November 1973

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

USSR; Nationalist Trends in the Soviet Republics

Summary

There has been a noticeable revival of nationalist feeling among the peoples of the Soviet Union in recent years which to varying degrees has affected all the major Soviet ethnic minorities as well as the more numerous Great Russians. This nationalist mood is symptomatic of the waning of Marxist-Leninist ideological elan and has been fostered by the relative relaxation in the political atmosphere of the post-Stalin era.

Within certain limits, the non-Russian peoples have been allowed to explore their own cultural heritages, separate from the Russian experience, although some have done so more enthusiastically than Moscow had anticipated. This has led to a renaissance in minority cultures and to a new spirit of national self-assertiveness and pride that, while not anti-communist, is decidedly anti-Russian. As a result, the trend toward Russification of the culture and of the political life of minority peoples has been slowed and, in some significant respects, reversed.

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Most important, native elites have emerged in the 14 non-Russian republics [redacted] during this period, and the role of the Russians and other Slavs in directly running the affairs of the republics has in most cases diminished accordingly. Although equally as dedicated to communist principles as their former Russian overseers, local cadres in many of the republics have become increasingly infected by the present tide of nationalism. Where Russian culture and language, the culture and language of Lenin, once provided the only model for communists in the minority areas, these local cadres are now drawing on their own pasts to infuse communism with a national hue.

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The tendency for national considerations to creep into the policies of minority leaders has perennially posed a difficult problem for Moscow, since one of the tenets of the official party line is that economic and cultural development of all the minority areas should be encouraged. The line between national pride (acceptable) and national exclusiveness (unacceptable) is hard to draw. Attempts to counter local nationalism by such methods as appealing to the higher loyalty of Soviet patriotism and tightening up central economic controls and party discipline have been only partially successful.

The amorphous condition of Soviet politics in the early post-Khrushchev years contributed significantly to the growth of national particularism. The diffusion of authority within the collective leadership made for compromise and delay in decision-making and provided some immunity to local leaders, no matter how errant. The local leaders became increasingly entrenched and were able to serve their own interests and those of their republics by taking advantage of the lack of cohesion within the leadership. The fact that some of the more important regional leaders were Politburo members ensured that the nationality issue would be not merely a matter between Moscow and the provinces, but also a political issue in Kremlin infighting.

The extent to which local nationalist interests played a part in the policies of regional leaders has varied from republic to republic depending on numerous factors, among them the degree of nationalist sentiment among the people, the situation within the local party leadership itself, and the leadership's control over the local population. Where public acceptance of Soviet rule is still low, for instance, local officials are too concerned with maintaining control and too dependent on Moscow to consider any encouragement of nationalist sentiment. For others, nationalist sentiment has been a tempting source of political power. And for those who have found themselves at odds with Moscow's politics and policies, the temptation to use it has proved irresistible.

In the post-Khrushchev era, Ukrainian party boss Shelest, Georgian party boss Mzhavanadze, and Estonian party chief Kebin emerged as the most openly nationalistic republic leaders. Not only were they the most independent-minded, but they seemed to be the most strongly opposed to the further aggrandizement of Brezhnev's power, presumably seeing it as a threat to collective leadership and thus to their own freedom of action.

In one way or another, all three were also dissatisfied with regime policies with which Brezhnev became increasingly identified. The more they became caught up in these political and policy disputes, the more they sought to bolster their positions by building up local support through appeals to nationalist interests.

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Leaders in those regions that have benefited most from Moscow's economic policies have been more cautious in encouraging local nationalist sentiment. Furthermore, in many instances political obligations to Brezhnev or dependence on his patronage have imposed further restraints.

The general secretary, taking advantage of conflicting regional interests, has been able to play one provincial leader off against another and broaden his own base of support. His strategy was particularly evident in the months before the 24th party congress in 1971, when a new five-year plan was being hammered out and political alignments were being recast in anticipation of changes at the congress. During this period, Brezhnev made a swing through a number of the republics of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus, drumming up the support of local leaders by openly identifying himself with the official policy of giving priority to the economic development of these areas. In some instances Brezhnev evidently promised additional economic assistance in return for their political support.

Brezhnev's strategy further aggravated relations with Shelest, Mzhavanadze, and Kebin. The efforts of these three to bolster their positions by appealing to nationalist sentiments helped them withstand the Brezhnev steamroller temporarily, but this stance ultimately was to become a liability for them.

At the congress, Brezhnev brought matters to a head by putting greater stress than before on the primacy of national interests over regional needs. In so doing, he was banking on the support of many of his Politburo colleagues, particularly Suslov, who had become increasingly concerned over the growth of particularism in the national republics. He could also count on the support of those regional leaders whose favor he had courted. All of them quickly and dutifully fell in with the new line. Shelest, Mzhavanadze, and Kebin were effectively isolated by this maneuver, and Brezhnev emerged from the congress significantly strengthened.

Since then, one by one, Brezhnev's regional critics have fallen by the wayside. Shelest was ousted from his Ukrainian post in May 1972. While the immediate cause was reportedly his opposition to the summit meeting, his vulnerability was increased by his nationalist stance, and it was on this score alone that he subsequently was directly criticized in public. He was replaced in the Ukraine by Brezhnev's long-time ally Shcherbitsky, who immediately set about reversing Shelest's rather tolerant policy on Ukrainian nationalism. Mzhavanadze, embarrassed by the exposure of widespread corruption and economic nationalism in Georgia, retired under a cloud in September 1972. Only Kebin remains, and he has noticeably moderated his public support of particularism.

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With these powerful and entrenched leaders out of the way or silenced, a tougher stand against local nationalism emerged. Preparations for the celebration in December 1972 of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the USSR increasingly became a vehicle for expounding this line. The focus was on economic matters, especially on the need to achieve a closer integration of the economies of the individual national republics and to subordinate their interests to those of the country as a whole.

The question of how far to go in this regard seems to have been a matter of sharp behind-the-scenes debate on the eve of the celebration. A number of radical proposals were put forward, including a suggestion that republic borders be altered in the interest of more efficient economic development. In his report at the December celebration, Brezhnev gave official approval to the new tougher line on minority relations. Although he did not sanction the more extreme positions, his theoretical formulations could open the way for a further downgrading of the importance of nationality factors in policy decisions. The regime is likely to proceed with caution in this matter, however, so as not to provoke adverse public reaction among the non-Russian peoples.

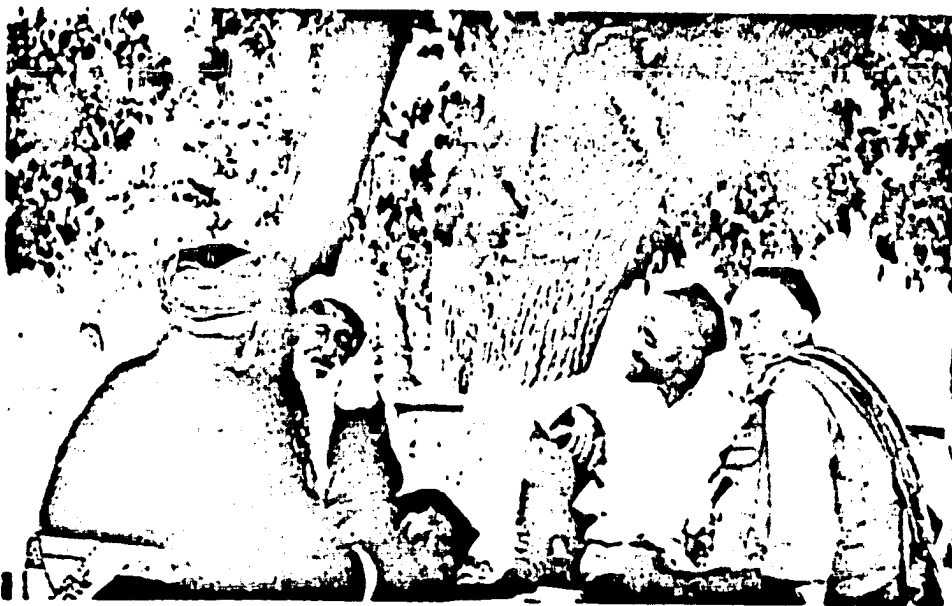
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**Khrushchev to Brezhnev - The Pendulum Swings**

The existence in the USSR of nearly 100 different peoples with different cultures and traditions, rather than losing significance with the passing of time as communist ideology predicts, has become a factor of increasing political and economic importance. There has been a noticeable revival of nationalist sentiment in recent years, a reminder that despite the official accent on common Soviet characteristics—often hardly distinguishable from the dominant Russian culture—the USSR is still very much a multinational country.

The relatively relaxed political atmosphere of the post-Stalin era led to a renaissance in minority cultures and a heightened national awareness. A new form of nationalism, one developed within the framework of the communist ideology and a product of socialist experience, seems to have emerged. This growth of national self-assertiveness, while not anti-communist, is decidedly anti-Russian and has resulted in a gradual de-Russification of some important aspects of the cultural and political life of some of the minority republics.

This form of nationalism has always posed a difficult problem for Moscow officials, since it equates with the party's policy of encouraging the cultural and economic development of all minority peoples. There has been considerable disagreement over where to draw the line, and the official attitude has swung back and forth rather widely in the past two decades.



Uzbek Teahouse

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Khrushchev's policy toward nationalism in the early post-Stalin years was fairly tolerant. Some of his decisions, particularly the decentralization of economic management under the sovnarkhoz (regional economic council) system, gave rise to localist tendencies, however, and ultimately began to dilute Moscow's control over the provinces. A reaction set in, and by 1962 Khrushchev himself had become frankly assimilationist in his views on the question, pushing a policy aimed at rapid merger of all the peoples into a single Soviet nationality. This was accompanied by yet another reorganization of economic management. The Central Asian economic regions were lumped together under a new Central Asian party bureau, with a Russian at its head and steps were taken to accomplish the same thing in the Caucasus and the Baltic republics. These moves were highly unpopular with local party and government officials, a factor which contributed to their willingness to support the coup against Khrushchev.

Khrushchev's successors, moving quickly to undo his organizational schemes and modify his policy of stepped-up integration, tried to satisfy several interests. On the one hand, the sovnarkhoz system was replaced by centralized ministerial control from Moscow. On the other hand, talk of the gradual merger of the nationalities all but disappeared from official pronouncements; it was made clear that such a merger would come about only after the world-wide triumph of communism. The readjusted official line placed equal stress on the "flourishing" of the culture and economy of each of the nationalities and their simultaneous, gradual "drawing together." This dialectical formula masked uncertainty, if not disagreement, within the leadership over the long-range policy to be pursued and allowed minority groups considerable latitude to concentrate on the "flourishing" aspect while paying no more than lip service to the goal of rapprochement.

#### Signs of De-Russification

There is abundant evidence of increased national assertiveness in almost all minority areas, particularly since Khrushchev's ouster. This has generally taken the form of a subtle—and at times not so subtle—discrimination against Russians and things Russian. On a personal level, there has been rudeness of local inhabitants in certain republics toward Russians, such as the pretense of not being able to understand or speak their language. Russians have long complained about the arrogant behavior of the prideful Georgians. In the Baltic region, which has become a mecca for both Russian settlers and tourists because of its high standard of living and Western flavor, the problem became so serious last year that local officials were forced to acknowledge the situation publicly and to launch a press campaign in an

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effort to discourage such discourtesy. Ukrainians and Belorussians, who have also emigrated in large numbers to the outlying republics, are viewed by the local inhabitants as Russians, and have received the same unfriendly treatment.

Recent information on demographic trends shows that the population tide is running against the Russians. The census taken in 1970 confirmed earlier evidence of a striking disparity between the birth rate of Europeans and non-Europeans. The peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus far outdistance the Russians and other Slavs, as well as the Baltic peoples, in their rate of growth. As a result, the Russians now compose 53.4 percent of the population as against 54.8 percent in the previous census in 1959. If the present trend continues, the Russians will cease to be in the majority in a few decades. While the impact is likely to be largely psychological, it could affect the traditional role of the Russians as colonizers.

The 1970 census shows that the Russians, and to a lesser extent the Ukrainians and Belorussians, continue to spread out into the outlying republics. In Central Asia, however, the birth rate of the indigenous population has more than offset the influx, so that the percentage of Russians in the area has declined. Georgia is the one republic where there has been an absolute decline in the numbers of Russians since the 1959 census. The strong anti-Russian bias of the Georgians, as well as a decrease in job opportunities in the republic, may account for this decline. On the other hand, the influx during the past ten years of Russians into the Baltic republics, especially Estonia and Latvia where the birth rate is low, threatens to swamp the local population and has been one of the main reasons for the heightened nationalism in the area and the increased hostility toward the Russians.

The census data also point to the continued vitality of major minority cultures and indicate that the peoples of the various nationalities continue to have a strong attachment to their native language. Although bilingualism has grown as a result of the emphasis on knowledge of Russian as a lingua franca, the percentage of members of most nationalities who consider their native language as their primary language is greater than in 1959. There is nonetheless, a growing dependency on Russian by most of the dispersed ethnic groups, such as Jews, by small groups, and by the Ukrainians and Belorussians—who are culturally and linguistically close to the Russians.

In the Baltic republics, particularly, non-natives are under considerable pressure to learn the local language. In fact, Estonian party officials have

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Russians at Estonian language class in Tallin

made this a matter of official policy, insisting that all those who work in service industries eventually be able to speak both Russian and Estonian. This policy is aimed at easing ethnic tensions and preventing Russian from becoming the dominant culture. Census statistics indicate that, in fact, a significant percentage of Slavs now living in the Baltic have a good command of the local language. Russians will often confess to a certain envy of the stylish, sophisticated Balts, particularly Estonians, and there is even evidence that a kind of reverse Russification is taking place—that many Russians living in the area try to pass themselves off as Balts.

The number of Russians living in Georgia who have learned to speak Georgian also appears to be quite high. By contrast, apparently very few Russians or other Slavs who migrate to Central Asia bother to learn the local tongues, no doubt because they still consider themselves the “elder brothers” in that region and are content to live in isolated enclaves.

Another important indication of the de-Russification trend is the increased role of native cadres in running their own affairs, again an outgrowth of the relatively liberal official policy in the post-Stalin years. Their growing importance is shown in the changing composition of the membership of the republic party central committee—a roster of the local governing elite. In almost all the republics, the number of Slavs appears to have dropped substantially over the past 15 years. Thus in Central Asia, the number of Slavs who are voting members of the central committees has dropped from 30 or 40 percent to about 20 percent.

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Even in Georgia and Armenia, where the number of Slavs among the leadership has traditionally been the lowest, a further decrease has taken place. There now are only seven Slavs on the 123-man Georgian central committee, for example. The only republic in which the percentage of Slavs has remained about the same is Latvia, a reflection of the oppressed state of the local leadership and the importance Moscow places on Latvia as its beachhead in the Baltic. In Estonia, where the influx of Russians has been just as heavy, the number of Russians among the full members of the central committee has dropped from 29 to about 19 percent.

There is no evidence that members of the new native elite are in any way less loyal or less disciplined party members than their Slavic counterparts, or, in the case of the Central Asians, less appreciative than their elders of the economic progress communism has brought them; but they are impatient for a piece of the action. Furthermore, the increasingly indigenous composition of the local elites is bound to engender a feeling of greater confidence in dealing with the Russians and add a more native flavor to local politics.

The Balts, for instance, have cited the greater role of native officials in local government as evidence that Russification is on the wane, and evidently many Russians have even seen in it the end of "the empire." A Ukrainian, who had lived and worked for many years in Lithuania recently wrote an article in the Soviet press complaining about the difficulty he had in convincing friends in the Ukraine that the Slavs were not being "pushed out" of the Baltic. Nevertheless, discrimination against Russian job seekers is evidently not uncommon in non-Russian areas. One local official was quoted in the Soviet press disapprovingly as saying, "we have our own specialists now."

#### **Nationalism in Vogue**

There is considerable evidence of awakening nationalist consciousness among native cadres, and it appears in many cases to be of fairly recent origin. One Soviet scholar, a Russian who has made a number of trips to official symposiums in Central Asia over the years, noted that the native intelligentsia did not emerge in these areas until the 1940s. Most had been educated in Russia or by Russians and were permeated with Russian ideas. They took great pride in their Russian libraries and their flawless Russian. When the scholar returned to Central Asia in the 1960s, however, he found all this changed. Everyone was speaking his native language, and the younger generation in particular was deep in the study of Moslem traditions and the common Turkic heritage.

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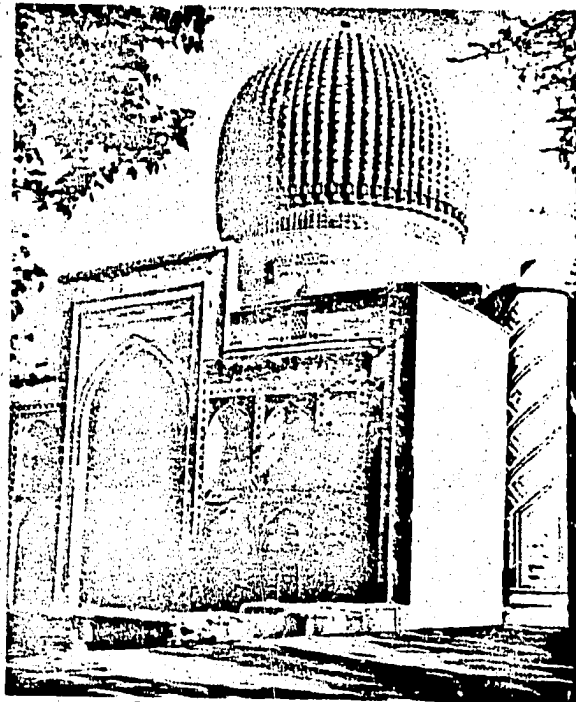
A similar report comes from Armenia where publication for the first time in the Soviet period of the works of classical Armenian writers has allegedly caused a nationalist revival, and the once thoroughly Russified intellectuals are fast becoming Armenianized. With some exceptions, much the same story has been repeated in the other republics.

One aspect of the dynamism of this nationalization of the new Soviet-educated native elite—and a disturbing aspect from the regime's point of view—was revealed in a survey conducted among the Tatars of Kazan by a Soviet sociologist. The survey, published in 1969, found that better education, greater mobility, and increased knowledge of Russian had in many ways seemed to exacerbate national prejudices, rather than diminish them. The sociologist found that increased contact between Russians and Tatars generated competition and thus gave rise to a heightened sense of ethnic awareness. The survey's results suggest that nationalism, rather than fading away under conditions of modernization and industrialization may be a growing problem.  nationalist sentiment is far stronger among today's teenagers than among the older generations.

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In sum, there seems to have been a coalescing of forces around the cause of local nationalism. Even some of the more liberal writers and economists, who had previously looked to Moscow for progressive reforms and viewed nationalism in the minority republics as a thoroughly provincial and anti-libertarian force, have changed their focus. As hopes for the economic reform introduced in 1965 faded and the atmosphere in Moscow grew more sterile and conformist, these liberals began to view the pressures for decentralization which were being generated by local nationalism as the only remaining way to bring about change in Moscow.

One bold attempt to synthesize the centrifugal nationalist currents—especially the process of de-Russification in minority areas—and to give them doctrinal legitimacy was made in 1969 by an Estonian writing in the Estonian party journal. With unusual candor the author noted that the official policy calling for eventual merger of all nationalities into one Soviet



Gur Emir Tomb in Samarkand

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people was viewed by many as nothing more than a guise for promoting Russification. He argued against this policy, maintaining that while Russian culture had played a major role as a catalyst in the development of national socialist cultures, the cultures of all the minority peoples had now reached a mature level. He cited the example of Estonia, noting with approval that most of the plays being produced today were Estonian not Russian as in the 1950s.

The author suggested that instead of one uniform culture, there might in the future be a number of regional groupings. Isn't it conceivable, he asked, that the literature of the Caucasus might be influenced more by the Dagestan writer Gamzatov than by Voznesensky, and that Central Asia might look to Aytmatov rather than to Sholokhov. Not surprisingly, no one else had the temerity to echo these views, at least publicly, and certainly not to extend his concept of cultural polycentrism to economic and political affairs.

#### **Nationalism Fanned by Moscow Politics**

The amorphous condition of Soviet politics in the early post-Khrushchev years contributed significantly to the growth of particularism in the republics. The diffusion of authority within the collective leadership made for compromise and delay in decision-making, and central party guidance was relatively lax compared with that during the Khrushchev era. It seemed to be difficult for the leadership to agree on the ouster of local officials, no matter how errant. As a result, there were very few changes in the party and government leadership of the republics from 1965 until 1970.

Local leaders became increasingly entrenched in their positions and attempted to further their own interests and those of their republics by taking advantage of the lack of cohesion within the national leadership and trading political support for favors rendered. The fact that some of the more important regional leaders were Politburo members ensured that the nationality question would not be merely a matter between Moscow and the provinces, but a factor in Kremlin politics.

The extent to which nationalism has crept into the policies of local party organizations in the various republics has depended on an array of factors, among them the degree of local nationalist sentiment, the situation within the party leadership itself, and the extent of its control over the population. In Moldavia, for example, where neighboring Romania's irredentist claims continue to be a distracting lure, local leaders are too concerned with maintaining their control over the population to dare relax the struggle against all nationalist stirrings.

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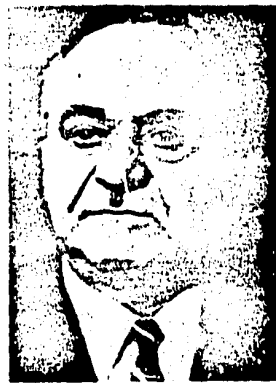
The same is, to some extent, true of Lithuania, where the general hostility that all Baltic peoples share toward Moscow has taken a more disorderly and even violent form. This is partly because church-state relations are more strained in Catholic Lithuania than in Lutheran Estonia and Latvia and partly because the Lithuanian standard of living is still considerably lower than in the other two Baltic republics. The serious riots in Kaunas last spring, sparked by the self-immolation of a nationalistically minded youth, is a case in point and served to reinforce the Lithuanian leaders' distrust of local nationalism. At the other end of the spectrum is Belorussia. There are few signs of nationalism in the policies of the party organization, but this is because nationalist sentiment among the Belorussian people—in contrast to the Balts—is almost non-existent.

For those republic leaders not faced with the problem of maintaining public order, nationalist sentiment where it exists has been a tempting source of political power. How far party leaders in individual republics have gone in catering to this sentiment has depended largely on their relations with Moscow. For those who have found themselves at odds with Moscow's policies and with its chief spokesman Brezhnev, the temptation to use it has proved irresistible. On the other hand, leaders in republics that have seemed to benefit most from Moscow's economic policies have been more cautious about giving overt support to local nationalist movements. In many instances political obligations to Brezhnev or dependence on his patronage have imposed further restraints.

In the post-Khrushchev era, Ukrainian party boss Shelest, Georgian party boss Mzhavanadze, and Estonian party chief Kebin emerged as the most openly nationalistic republic leaders. They also seemed to be the republic leaders most strongly opposed to the further aggrandizement of power by Brezhnev, presumably seeing in this a threat to collective leadership and thus to their own freedom of action.



Shelest



Mzhavanadze



Kebin

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For one reason or another, all three were also dissatisfied with policies with which Brezhnev had become increasingly identified. It seems that the more they became caught up in these political and policy disputes, the more they sought to bolster their positions by building up local support through appeals to nationalist interests. Individually, however, they represented quite different kinds of nationalism.

**Mzhavanadze: Heir to Georgian Pride**

In 1953, Mzhavanadze, a career political officer in the armed forces and an outsider to Georgian politics (though a Georgian by birth), was brought in to try to put an end to the bitter factionalism in Georgian politics that had been stirred up by the machinations of native sons Stalin and Beria. After 20 years in power, Mzhavanadze himself had succumbed to the Georgian way of life, a life marked by inordinate pride in all things Georgian and a laissez-faire attitude toward business affairs. This attitude has led to the amassing of large personal fortunes by a few Georgians, which, judging from Soviet statistics on personal saving accounts, have no parallel in any other republic except Armenia, where corruption and illegal private enterprise also abound.

In recent years Mzhavanadze reportedly began to share in this good life. He built large expensive dachas for himself and indulged his love of hunting. In the process, he became involved with some of the more wealthy Georgian entrepreneurs, extending them protection in return for personal favors. Mzhavanadze's dependence on them was reflected in the increasingly nationalistic tone of his public remarks in recent years. After 20 years in Georgia he was reportedly still considered an outsider, however, which indicates the degree of Georgian clannishness.

Private wealth in Georgia contrasts sharply with the poverty of the public sector, as evidenced by the lack of new construction and by the low rate of growth of capital investment. Moscow's reluctance, for whatever reason—political or otherwise—to provide money for Georgia could have been a factor in Mzhavanadze's coolness toward Brezhnev and in his flaunting of Georgian nationalism.

**The Estonianization of Kebin**

Kebin was put at the head of the Estonian party organization in 1950 to combat strong nationalist tendencies in the local party organization. Until 1944 he had spent his entire life in the Soviet Union and could not even speak Estonian. In recent years, he has reportedly learned to speak the

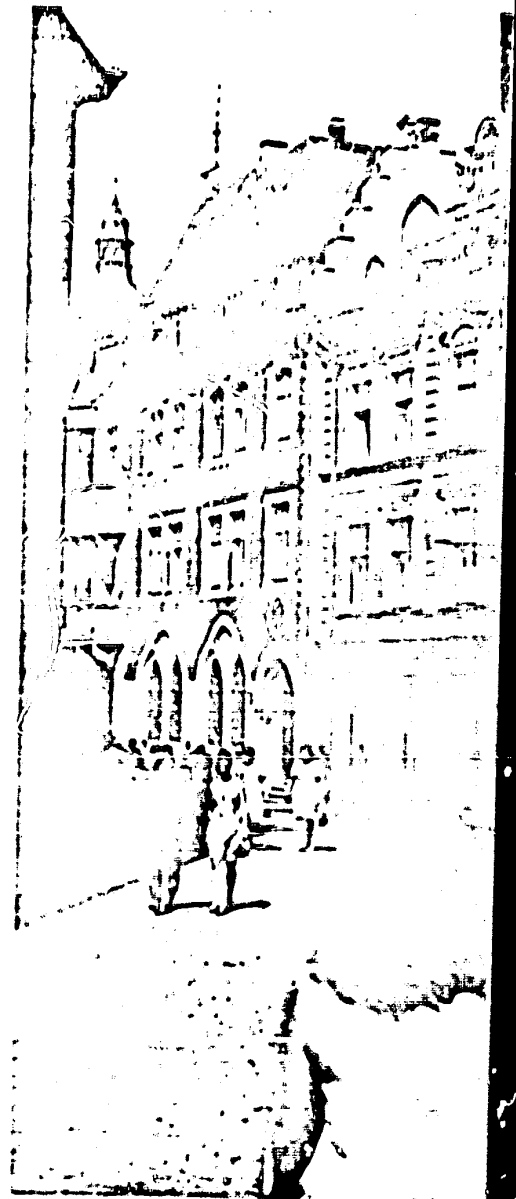
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language parably, and in Estonian circles now uses the name Johannes instead of Ivan. More important, he has gone along with, if not presided over, a quiet nationalist revival, which shows the strong influence of progressive Western intellectual currents, and of Finland in particular. Kebin's stress on the mutual enrichment aspect of the official policy of rapprochement provided theoretical justification for this revival and specifically for the accompanying degree of de-emphasis of things Russian.

The transformation of Kebin into a spokesman for Baltic interests would not have been possible but for his success in maintaining order in Estonia. He has not had to contend with the public disturbances that have plagued the Lithuanian leadership. And, unlike the Latvian leaders, who are still cowed as a result of a thorough purge in 1958, Kebin has built up a strong position within the local party and thereby has gained some independence from Moscow. While he is by no means popular with the Estonian people, there now seems to be some appreciation among them of the delicate balancing act he must perform.

The Estonianization of Kebin was undoubtedly hastened by the growing dismay he and other Estonian leaders felt at the reactionary drift of policy in Moscow during the late 1960s. Their resistance to this trend has been reflected in the editorial policy of the republic's leading theoretical journal, *Kommunist Estonii*. The journal has taken a generally more progressive line than similar publications in other republics. For instance, the bold article mentioned earlier calling for cultural polycentrism, appeared in *Kommunist Estonii*. Moreover, it alone among the republic journals continued to publish notices of the rehabilitation of Stalin's victims with regularity and to use the term "era of the personality cult" after that phraseology had been banned by Moscow.

An unusual article that appeared in late 1968, which called for the convocation of an all-union



Street in Tallin

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party conference, was particularly revealing of the Estonian leadership's negative attitude toward political developments in Moscow. The right to hold a conference between congresses—a practice discontinued after Stalin's demise—had been reinstated in the party rules in 1966, but no further mention was made of it until the Estonian article, nor has there been reference to it since. The call for a conference was in a context unmistakably critical of the way decisions were being made in Moscow. The article stressed that it was impossible to achieve any unity of action without freedom of discussion and criticism. The many important political issues that had arisen, said the author, should be taken up in a party forum broader than the Central Committee plenum.

The bluntness with which Kebin and other Estonians have voiced their complaints with Moscow is most unusual in present-day Soviet politics. The outspoken views of these men have helped to clarify important issues, to reveal the limits of debate, and in some cases simply to indicate that a controversy exists.

Specifically, the Estonian leaders have been concerned over the steady encroachment of central power and the obstacles raised to Estonian efforts to tailor policy to local needs and conditions. With their high standard of living, skilled and disciplined labor force, and Western traditions of efficiency and pragmatism, they are impatient with the bureaucratic ways of Moscow. They were openly disturbed at the decision in 1965 to dismantle Khrushchev's sovnarkhoz system and re-establish central ministries. Kebin expressed the fear at that time that this would lead to excessive power in Moscow.

He and other Estonians have since chalked up a remarkable record of opposition to any measure they consider will lead to further loss of power to Moscow. Kebin spoke out against a proposal in 1966 to establish a unified cadres department in the Central Committee. On two occasions, he argued against the wisdom of creating a hierarchy of unions to run the collective farms, claiming this would lead to dangerous overcentralization of the management of agriculture. He was the only high-level official to voice his opposition openly. Others obviously shared his views, though for different reasons, and both proposals were shelved.

Estonian Government officials have fought against establishing a number of ministries in the republic and in one instance flatly refused to follow Moscow's lead, complaining that the central authorities should find some way to accommodate the smaller republics without swamping them with bureaucratic administration.

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In addition to experimenting with administrative reforms, Estonian and other Baltic leaders also sought to give priority to the development of light industry and agriculture. This stand led to sharp words in early 1970, when several leading Estonian officials complained bitterly and at some length that money was not being put into the development of the livestock and dairy industry in areas--such as Estonia--where it was most profitable, that instead Moscow officials were talking about raising prices. This "astonishing" approach, the Estonian premier complained, would simply encourage inefficient marginal production. The Estonians lost this argument, presumably because farm lobbies elsewhere carried more political weight with Brezhnev.

As Brezhnev moved to consolidate his power within the leadership and became the leading spokesman for regime policy, the focus of the Estonians' ire began to concentrate on him. In the period before the 24th party congress, Kebin never referred to Brezhnev by name, and when he did mention him at the congress, he managed to misquote him.

#### **Shelest - A Conservative Nationalist**

Shelest was far more of a national figure than either Mzhavanadze or Kebin by virtue of his position as a full member of the Politburo. His policy views were shaped both by political relationships at the center and by the situation in the Ukraine. There has long been a sharp division in the Ukraine between the nationalist western portion, part of which was not incorporated into the Soviet Union until 1945, and the more Russified eastern industrial section. This geographic division is mirrored by a split within the party ranks, which has been widened by efforts of Ukrainian leaders, past and present, in or on their way to higher posts in Moscow, to gain control over the Ukrainian party organization. Because of its size, the Ukraine is a key power-base in the Soviet political system.

Since taking over leadership of the Ukrainian party in 1963, Shelest was involved in a power struggle with Brezhnev and his local ally, Ukrainian Premier Shcherbitsky, both of whom come from the eastern Ukrainian industrial area of Dnepropetrovsk. In his battles with this Moscow-oriented faction, Shelest had little recourse but to turn for support to the more nationalist group in the Ukrainian leadership, and his public statements accordingly took on an increasingly nationalistic tone.

The brand of nationalism with which Shelest was identified--not that he necessarily subscribed to all aspects of it--was strongly conservative, with

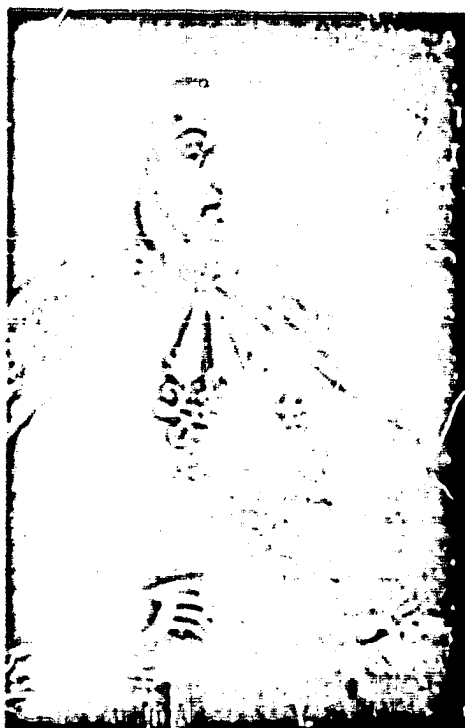
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roots in the Ukrainian rural past. A novel published in 1968, which caused considerable stir, reflected this conservative nationalist philosophy. The novel, *Sobor* (The Cathedral), was written by Oles Gonchar, one of the Ukraine's most eminent authors and the chairman of the Ukrainian Writers Union. It posed in allegorical form the conflict between the traditional way of life in the Ukraine, as symbolized by the cathedral, and the more urbanized, Russified present. The author's sympathies clearly lay with the former. The fact that Brezhnev's home base of Dnepropetrovsk, although disguised, was obviously the setting of the story pointed up the political implications of its publication. In the ensuing controversy Shelest publicly sided with the author and for some time was able to protect him from reprisal.

Shelest himself wrote a book in the fall of 1970, *Our Soviet Ukraine*, in which he indulged in some romanticizing of the Ukraine's past, particularly the role of the Zaporozhe Cossacks. Stressing the progressive nature of their society and government, he repeated Marx's approving reference to the community as a "Christian republic." The Cossack community was broken up by the Russian Tsars in the 18th century, and Marx's evaluation has been

an embarrassment to Moscow historians, something Shelest must have been well aware of.



A Zaporozhe Cossack

Shelest's book included a catalogue of Ukrainian economic achievements. The book was published when debate over the new Five-Year Plan (1971-1975) was at its height. There were reports at the time that Shelest was angered by what he considered to be unfair treatment of the Ukraine in the proposed plan, and his speech at the party congress in April 1971 seemed to confirm such feelings on his part. His book seemed designed to bolster his case that the economic potential of the Ukraine was being neglected and that the republic was being discriminated against in the allocation of resources.

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### Economic Policy - The "Haves" and "Have-Nots"

Economic issues have done much to fuel dissension between national regions and between these regions and Moscow. The central planners' work, made difficult by the vast size of the Soviet Union and the uneven distribution of population and resources, is further complicated by the multinational and federal nature of the state. Problems of regional development thus are of major concern, and the task of allocating resources is often an abrasive process in which conflicting nationality and regional interests must somehow be reconciled.

One of the basic goals of Soviet nationality policy has long been to "equalize" the level of economic development of all the republics by giving priority attention to the development of the backward areas of the former Tsarist empire. Official commitment to this goal, however, has ebbed and flowed over the years. After being played down in the last years of Khrushchev's tenure as party boss, the goal was again stressed by his successors as a corollary to the policy of encouraging the full economic and cultural "flourishing" of each republic. The priority assigned to the development of the less industrialized republics was written into the eighth and ninth five-year plans, covering the years 1966-1970 and 1971-1975. The plans appeared to have particularly favored several of the Central Asian republics and Armenia, Belorussia, Moldavia, and Lithuania.

This goal has never been an overriding consideration, however, and has been quietly overlooked in cases where it was not consistent with other political and economic goals of national interest. For example, some of the peripheral areas of Central Asia have been left behind. Furthermore, for strategic and economic reasons the highest priority in the last two plans has been given to development of the Russian Republics' vast unpopulated eastern reaches.

Nevertheless, concern for achieving economic parity of all the republics has probably resulted in a higher rate of investment in certain republics than would otherwise have been the case. The results have been uneven in terms of per capita production. Belorussia, Moldavia, and Lithuania are currently experiencing an economic boom, while the Central Asian republics have continued to slip further behind the national average, but this is largely the result of the low return on capital investment in Central Asia and the burgeoning birth rate in these areas, and not because money is not flowing in. For instance, per capita investment in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan was almost twice that in the Ukraine and even in Lithuania during the 1960s and early 1970s.

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The policy of preferential development of Central Asia and Siberia has been a highly controversial issue. This project is enormously expensive as a result of the harsh climate and the lack of communal facilities. The burden of financing falls heavily on other, more developed industrial republics. For instance, they must make large contributions through the redistribution of the turnover tax, one of the few publicized ways in which capital is transferred from one republic to another via the all-union budget. In 1970, for example, the Russian Republic, the Ukraine, Estonia, and Latvia were allowed to keep only 26.36 percent of the revenue from the local turnover tax, while Armenia and four of the Central Asian republics retained all their revenue and received large subsidies as well.

In terms of economic efficiency, Lithuania, Belorussia, Georgia, and parts of the Ukraine probably offer the best investment opportunities. Adequate labor resources and well-developed transportation and support facilities in those areas make for a high rate of return on investments. Yet Georgia and the Ukraine seem to have been overlooked in this regard, despite the high level of profitability of their industries. In Georgia, in particular, the very slow growth of capital input has been a severe brake on industrial expansion.

In the mid-1960s Belorussian and Ukrainian party and government officials were the most vocal regional leaders in touting the advantages of investing in their republics. They held that energy sources in the European area were being neglected at the expense of the highly costly development of Siberia. The Belorussians were apparently more successful than the Ukrainians in making their case, and a number of large integrated refinery-chemical complexes were planned in the republic, despite opposition from the Siberian lobby.

The failure of the Ukraine to gain similar concessions undoubtedly contributed to the strain between Shelest and Brezhnev. At the 24th Party Congress Shelest openly complained about the issue, specifically charging that Tyumen oil and gas were receiving unfair preferential treatment over the Donbass coal fields.

Another source of conflict between republic leaders has been the preferential treatment long accorded heavy industry. This policy has generally accorded with the interest of Central Asian leaders, who, like leaders in underdeveloped areas the world over, put great stock in rapid industrialization. In fact, Kazakh party chief Kunayev emphasized in a recent speech that heavy industrial development would continue to receive priority treatment in his republic, even though the 24th Party Congress decreed that greater attention would be given in the future to the consumer goods sector.

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In the Baltic, where industrial development has been particularly rapid and there has been a massive influx of Russians to solve a local labor shortage, the official sanctity formerly attached to the doctrine of the primacy of heavy industry has been extremely unpopular. One Baltic official has even acknowledged that there are those who favor a ban on large industrial projects so as to stop the flood of Russians. This concern for the ethnic and cultural survival of the Baltic peoples has been reflected in the policies of local leaders. The Latvian leadership was thoroughly purged in 1958 on charges of nationalist deviations, specifically for favoring the development of light industry and items that could be consumed locally over the development of heavy industry. Sniechkus, party boss of Lithuania, reportedly was at least partially successful in the late 1960s in his efforts to get Moscow to modify a plan to build a large oil refinery on an historically revered river site. The Estonians, in recent years have skillfully used reports of emigres' concern over the ill effects of over-industrialization and pollution to make their point with Moscow and to suggest a slowdown in the growth of heavy industry.

Thus the evidence, while fragmentary, does suggest considerable disagreement over economic policy and a pattern of discrimination against certain republics, or at least a pattern perceived as discriminatory by the leaders of some republics. The Ukraine has steadily lost ground in comparison with the Russian Republic, which has a comparably developed economy. Large funds are being withdrawn from the Ukraine to finance investment in Siberia and Central Asia, while industrial growth rates planned for the Ukraine in the present Five Year Plan dropped below those for the RSFSR. The Ukraine, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, and the Moslem republic of Tadzhikistan, have the lowest projected industrial growth rate. The Balts probably welcome this slowdown in economic growth, however; their main quarrel with Moscow, as the Estonians have made clear, is over the questions of economic administration and which sectors of the economy should be favored.

#### • Brezhnev Plays Regional Politics

Brezhnev was able to take advantage of conflicts arising from uneven regional development to widen his own base of political support. Particularly in the critical period leading up to the 24th Party Congress, Brezhnev openly identified himself with the policy of giving preference to less-developed areas—Siberia, Central Asia, and some of the republics. While it is difficult to prove just where and to what extent political considerations figured in decisions concerning regional development, it is hardly fortuitous that party

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Brezhnev in Turkmenistan

leaders in those republics that seemed to be receiving favored economic treatment from Moscow either were old proteges of Brezhnev, such as Kunayev in Kazakhstan and Bodyul in Moldavia, or were quick to jump on his bandwagon.

During the late summer of 1970, when preparations for the party congress were getting under way and work on the next five-year plan was moving into high gear, Brezhnev attended the 50th anniversary celebration of the Kazakh Republic and then made a swing through all the Central Asian republics. Later in the fall, he was present at similar anniversary celebrations in two of the Caucasian republics, Azerbaydzhan and Armenia. His trips appear to have paid off handsomely in political dividends. On each occasion he picked up additional public support from regional chiefs gathered for the events. By the time of the Armenian celebration in November, only the Ukrainian, Georgian, and Estonian party bosses avoided making complimentary references to Brezhnev.

It later became apparent that in some instances the support Brezhnev picked up from local leaders was prompted by his diligent efforts in their behalf. Several months after Brezhnev's visit to Turkmenistan, the USSR Council of Ministers and the CPSU Central Committee passed a decree calling for more rapid economic development of that republic's productive

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forces and a fuller exploitation of its natural resources. A similar decree, outlining measures to revive the lagging economy of Azerbaydzhan, followed Brezhnev's trip to that republic in October 1970. In both instances, the local party bosses attributed the decisions to the personal initiative of Brezhnev and were effusive in their praise of the General Secretary for his sympathetic understanding of the needs of their republics.

Brezhnev's strategy appears to have further embittered his principal critics from the more industrialized European areas of the USSR—Shelest and Kebin—as well as Mzhavanadze, but these men were becoming increasingly outflanked. Their appeals to local nationalist sentiment helped them withstand the Brezhnev steamroller temporarily, but ultimately their position proved a serious liability which contributed to mounting concern of members of the Politburo, particularly party theoretician Suslov, over the problem of local nationalism.

#### Party Boss Calls in the Chips

Matters seemed to come to a head at the 24th Party Congress. Brezhnev, in an uncharacteristic and wholly unexpected move, included in his report Stalin's famous war-time toast to the Great Russian people for "their revolutionary energy, selfless industry, and profound internationalism." Brezhnev's praise of the Russians seemed to signal his identification with a tougher policy toward local nationalism. It was evidently intended to elicit expressions of loyalty to the Russians and, by extension, to Moscow, and thus put his more independent-minded regional critics on the spot.

In sniffing his ground, Brezhnev could count on the backing of his regional allies: those who owed their position to his patronage and those who had benefited from Soviet economic policies with which he was identified, such as Azerbaydzhan party boss Aliyev, Gapurov of Turkmenistan, and Kochinyan of Armenia. In their speeches at the congress, all of these men quickly fell into line with a chorus of tribute to the Russians, thanking them for their great personal and financial assistance and acknowledging the importance of the unifying and enriching influence of Russian culture and language. For some, this meant a rather awkward about-face. The Armenian party boss, for instance, only two weeks earlier had been proudly expounding on the richness of Armenian art and literature, with not a mention of its indebtedness to Russian culture.

The more nationalistic republic party bosses stood their ground but sounded oddly out of tune. Mzhavanadze continued to boast about the great influence of the "ancient and original" Georgian culture. Kebin again

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stressed the importance of the two-way nature of the policy of mutual enrichment, and Shelest implied that the Ukraine was providing more for the national economy than it was receiving in return. Shelest's speech stood in sharp contrast with that of Ukrainian Premier Shcherbitsky, who hammered away at the theme of the dependence of the Ukrainian economy on that of the Soviet Union.

Brezhnev's maneuver to isolate the three republic party bosses paid off. The party secretary emerged from the congress in a far stronger position than before, and his two proteges, Kunayev and Shcherbitsky, were elevated to full membership on the Politburo, in part as a reward for their loyal backing. The promotion of Shcherbitsky was a direct challenge to Shelest's position in the Ukraine and to his role as Politburo spokesman for that republic.

#### **Great Russian Nationalism: Action - Reaction**

On another level, Brezhnev's repetition of Stalin's toast was a direct appeal to the national pride of the Great Russians, in what seems to have been an attempt to identify himself more closely with their interests and to shed his Ukrainian image, acquired because of his many years in the Ukraine and his many Ukrainian cronies. Brezhnev was careful to direct his praise to the Russian working class as vanguard of the revolution, but his words were probably not understood or intended to be understood in so limited a context.

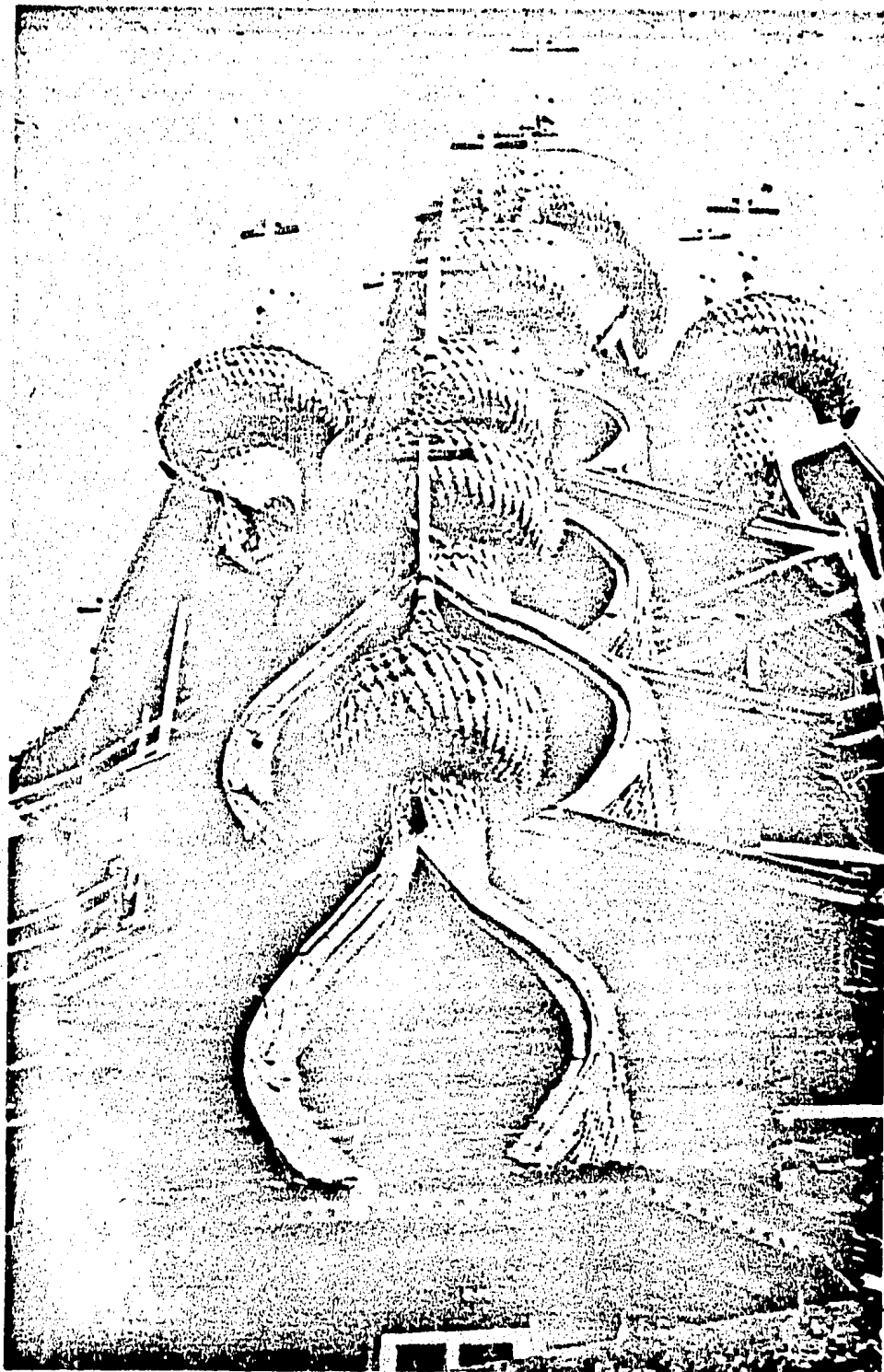
The same political and sociological forces that have given rise in recent years to increased nationalist sentiment among the minorities had also spawned an array of nationalist movements among the Russians. Many Russians evidently were offended by the lenient attitude toward local nationalism in the post-Khrushchev era, by such things as the disproportionately large representation of non-Russians—particularly Ukrainians—on the Politburo, and by the general "uppity" behavior of members of minority nationalities.

In its most extreme form, this nationalism combines hostility toward the West with anti-Semitism and strong neo-Stalinist leanings in domestic policy, whereas the mainstream of Russian nationalism is more moderate, more concerned with individual rights, and less anti-intellectual and anti-West. But all the currents to some degree look to the Russian past for spiritual and national revival and extol the unique character of the Russian people. Some Slavophiles, like their 19th century predecessors, lyricize rural life as the embodiment of the Russian character, while others turn to religion. On the popular level this has led to the rapid growth of historical societies and to new interest in renovating churches.

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18th century wooden church in Kizhi, northern Russia

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The official attitude toward these nationalist currents has been ambivalent. The leadership recognizes the dangers of allowing Russian nationalism full rein, as is illustrated by its long-standing decision not to set up a separate party leadership in the Russian Republic like those in the other union republics. Nevertheless, there has been a good measure of thinly disguised nationalism in official ideology and a recognition that the Russian language and the Russian people provide the cement that holds the Soviet Union together.

Although Great Russian nationalism is publicly discouraged, it is a rich vein which leaders in Moscow are tempted to tap for political support. There is considerable evidence that former first deputy premier Polyansky, now minister of agriculture, has given tacit encouragement to anti-Semitic and anti-Western stirrings and has on occasion sought to protect several of the more reactionary Slavophile writers. Party secretary Kirilenko also is reported to have given aid and comfort to Russian nationalist spokesmen.

A major attack on nationalist tendencies among the Russians appeared in the newspaper *Literary Gazette* in November 1972. The author, A. Yakovlev, then acting head of the Central Committee's propaganda department, dismissed the writings of several of the more reactionary authors as "hysterical." While he obviously had a degree of tolerance for the author of the line, "O native land of mine, whither have you gone, gay and sparkling Old Rus," he stressed that such views were basically anti-Marxist and worse, encouraged nationalist sentiment in the non-Russian republics.

The article, said to have been commissioned by Party Secretary Suslov, caused considerable stir in Moscow intellectual circles. It was seen as a sign of the end of the semi-official tolerance of the Slavophile movements. Six months after the article appeared, however, Yakovlev was transferred out of the Central Committee apparatus and sent in semi-exile to Canada as ambassador, raising questions as to how authoritative the article was after all. It is possible that the article was an effort of one group within the leadership to take advantage of the burgeoning crackdown on nationalism in the minority republics to make the point that Russian nationalism was a root cause. It may also have been used as ammunition against Polyansky, whose position was then beginning to weaken because of difficulties in the agriculture sector, which he was charged with overseeing.

In any event, Brezhnev's tribute to the Great Russians at the party congress and later at the 50th anniversary celebration in December 1972 was a recognition of a political fact of life: that the Russians are the dominant

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ethnic group, that they have played the leading role in the history of the country, and that Russian national pride is a force that is politically inexpedient to overlook. As a result, official policy will continue to be ambivalent.

#### The Axe Falls

No such ambivalence marked Moscow's relations with the non-Russian republics in the period following the 24th Party Congress. Brezhnev's political gains put his more nationalist critics on the defensive, and within a year and a half all had been removed from their posts or silenced. Shelest was abruptly replaced as Ukrainian party boss and given a far less important government job in Moscow on the eve of the summit meeting in Moscow in May 1972 because of his opposition to that meeting.

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Shelest was particularly vulnerable because of his nationalist leanings. He had reportedly been criticized several times earlier in party circles for his book, *Our Soviet Ukraine*. Brezhnev is said to have quoted parts of it at one party meeting, complaining, "This is where bourgeois nationalism begins." The charge of nationalism is the only one ever publicly leveled against Shelest. (Of course, it was more politic for Brezhnev to emphasize Shelest's nationalist deviations than to dwell on the more sensitive aspects of his opposition to detente or to the personal rivalry between them.)

Shcherbitsky immediately set about to reverse Shelest's relatively permissive policy toward local nationalism and to remove from office some of the former party boss's more pro-Ukrainian associates. The most important casualty was the party secretary for ideology, Ovcharenko, whose efforts to promote Ukrainian language and culture had at several ideological conferences reportedly brought him into direct conflict with Suslov. A prominent Georgian scholar is said to have come to Ovcharenko's defense at one meeting, remarking that if there were only one Ukrainian "nationalist," there was no cause for alarm. Ovcharenko was replaced in October by a notoriously pro-Moscow party official.

Shcherbitsky's speeches were implicitly critical of Shelest for his overzealous support of Ukrainian interests. For instance, it is obvious that when Shcherbitsky lashed out in a speech in October against the "poisonous idea"

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of unequal economic relationships, he had in mind Shelest's complaint at the congress that the Donbass coal industry was neglected in favor of Tyumen oil and gas. Shcherbitsky recalled that the Donbass industry was rebuilt in the 1920s through a national effort directed by Moscow, and he argued that a similar national effort was needed for other regional projects. He cited the Tyumen petroleum industry as an example, and warned in conclusion that any attempt to take the path of "national exclusiveness" would lead to "great harm."

Shelest was publicly criticized by name for the first time on the eve of his removal from the Politburo in the spring of 1973. An editorial article in the leading Ukrainian party journal, commenting on his book, accused him of fostering unhealthy nationalist sentiments by glorifying the Ukrainian past and seeking to promote a policy of economic autarky for the Ukraine. The article evidently covered much of the criticism that had been circulating in party channels.

During 1972, Georgian party boss Mzhavanadze became increasingly embroiled in the exposure of widespread corruption in his bailiwick and retired under a cloud in September, shortly after his 70th birthday. He was formally removed from candidate membership on the Politburo in December. His successor launched a housecleaning of major proportions, and the number of party and government officials who have been fired is already in the hundreds.

Kebin still heads the Estonian party organization but has noticeably modified his line. In an article published on the eve of the 50th anniversary celebration in December 1972, he went through the painful exercise of paying obeisance to Russian culture and language—something he had avoided in the past.

#### The Great 50th - The Pendulum Swings Back

The change in Moscow's attitude was most evident in preparations for the celebration in December 1972 of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The party theses published in February 1972 presented familiar blurry formulations that bespoke an uneventful affair. But by late summer, after Shelest's removal from the Ukraine, the anniversary had become a vehicle for a significant restatement of Soviet nationality policy, which more or less returned to the prevailing line of the later Khrushchev era. Shelest had apparently dragged his feet, and at the time of his ouster in late May the Ukraine was the only republic in which preparations for the anniversary had not begun. One of Shcherbitsky's first acts after taking over was to get the planning for the celebration started and on course.

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Up until summer, the dual process in the development of relations between the Soviet nationalities—the flourishing of all and their gradual drawing together—had been seen as a harmonious one in which each trend was viewed as of equal importance. Then, however, Soviet spokesmen began to assert that the process of drawing together would be given increasing emphasis.

The economic aspects of this drawing together received particular stress, indicating that a decision had been made to adopt a tougher, centralizing line in economic policy that would pay less attention to the economic interests of individual republics. The ideological rationale for this shift was the assertion—first voiced authoritatively in late May—that the official goal of raising the level of economic development of the backward areas of the Tsarist empire up to that of the most highly advanced areas had finally been achieved. Henceforth, decisions concerning the siting of industry and regional allocations of capital investment would be based solely on economic criteria.

A corollary of this formula that equalization had been achieved was the theme—hardly new, but now given additional emphasis—that the Soviet economy should be regarded as a single organic unit, not merely as the sum of the economies of the separate republics. As a Moscow lecturer noted in December, the Communist Party was seeking to spur integration of all the nationalities by linking their economies more closely on the basis of specialization and scientific division of labor. Only by achieving the maximum over-all production, it was claimed, could the interests of individual republics be best served.

This shift meant, of course, that efforts of local leaders to attain balanced, comprehensive economic development of their individual republics, once a legitimate pursuit, would now be suspect. The criticism of Shelest for allegedly seeking to achieve economic self-sufficiency for the Ukraine was obviously intended as an object lesson for other regional leaders. In fact, though, Shelest's chief mistake was that he did not adjust to the changing line on this or any other point.

Leaving aside the question of whether equalization has in fact been reached, the practical implications of these theoretical changes for future economic policy are none too clear. The goal of equalization, as mentioned before, was never an overriding one. The existence of valuable natural resources was more of a determining factor in the priority development of Central Asia than was concern over achieving parity in the economic development of the national republics.

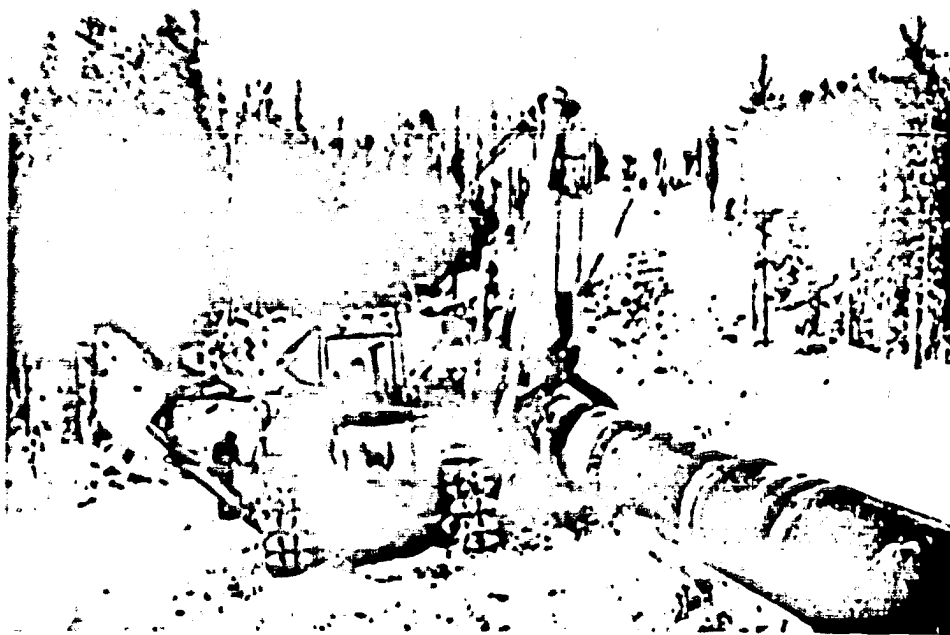
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If decisions on regional development are now to be made on the basis of economic rationality, the thorny question as to which areas offer the best long-term investment opportunities still remains. A number of Soviet economists have emphatically stated that equalization has been achieved in order to justify their position that even greater attention should be given to the rapid development of Siberia. It would seem that Ukrainians and other spokesmen for increased investment in the older, industrial areas of the European part of the Soviet Union could use the new formula equally well to make their own cases.

The change in formulation does, however, remove one of the arguments—that of underdevelopment—which leaders from the minority republics can use in pressing their claims in Moscow, and to this extent could make a difference. It is possible that some of the economically peripheral areas of Central Asia and the Caucasus that have recently been favored, Armenia in particular, may suffer. Concern over this question could explain why several Armenian economists, instead of echoing the new line, have continued to insist that economic development has not yet reached the same level in all republics.

Furthermore, the insistence that the nationality problem inherited from the Tsarist period has been solved and that as a result policy can be made solely on the basis of national interest does alter the ground rules for future



Oil pipeline construction in Siberia

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debate and could eventually open the way for further change. The flurry of attention given during 1972 to the nationality aspects of regional development seems to have been prompted not only by the 50th anniversary celebration and arguments involving Shelest and others, but also by the inception of a new long-range economic plan. Work on a plan covering 1976-1990 began in the spring of 1972 and is to continue through 1974. Much of the discussion clearly represented efforts of various interest groups to establish at the outset guiding principles for formulating the plan. Central planners and administrators, of course, are eager to gain as free a hand as possible for making decisions concerning regional development and to downgrade nationality considerations in resolving these questions.

The question of how far to go in pushing for closer economic and cultural integration of the national republics seems to have been the subject of behind-the-scenes debate in the fall of 1972, when final preparations for the anniversary celebration were being made. Some of this debate came to light in the spate of articles by leading party and government officials commemorating the event.

The strongest and most authoritative argument for an enforced pace in the "internationalization" of cultural and economic affairs was made by Belorussian party boss Masharov, a candidate member of the Politburo. Writing in the October issue of the leading theoretical journal, *Kommunist*, he undertook a major, comprehensive review of Soviet nationality policy that seemed designed to establish himself as a leading Soviet authority on ideology. Masharov implicitly took the position that the process of economic and cultural "merging" could and should begin in this present stage of mature socialism. This was the first time since the Khrushchev era that an official of his standing had advanced such a line.

Masharov held that the drawing together of the Soviet nations was taking place most rapidly in the economic field and warned against any attempts to slow it down. With Shelest and others clearly in mind, he specifically scored the efforts of some republic leaders to treat the economies of their areas as "self-contained" entities, to press for as large a capital investment as possible from all-union funds, and to exaggerate the contributions of their republics to the national economy.

Masharov stressed the importance of the emergence of multinational industrial complexes, with a labor force recruited from all the Soviet nationalities and with funds and material drawn from all the republics. He cited as examples the very petrochemical complexes in Belorussia that were being built over the strong objections of the Siberian lobby. Thus, he sought to advance sociological as well as economic arguments in favor of larger investments in Belorussia.

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The absence of nationalist pressures in Belorussia and the long-standing political rivalry between the Belorussian and Ukrainian party organizations for influence in national politics are important contributors to Masharov's strong centralist stand. There are signs that fellow Belorussian, Soviet First Deputy Premier Mazurov, shares Masharov's views on national relations.

Economic Regions, or Republics?

The most radical proposal advanced in the round of articles on the 50th anniversary was put forward by V. Kistanov, an economist in one of the key government groups working on the long-term plan. Writing in the December 1972 issue of *Questions of Economics*, Kistanov proposed that, where necessary, republic borders be altered in the interest of more efficient economic development. He quoted a statement by Lenin that ethnic composition was only one of the important factors in the drawing of borders, and he claimed that with the growing multinational character of all the republics, Soviet internal boundaries were losing their past significance.

Kistanov's proposal was undoubtedly inspired by the decision, subsequently announced by Brezhnev in his anniversary report, to revive plans to write a new constitution. Discussion in the early 1960s of a new constitution was accompanied by similar proposals for altering republic and other territorial boundaries to fit economic realities. One economist suggested at that time that the new constitution should establish principles for creating territorial-administrative structures and should not list all the subdivisions individually.

An article by then-first deputy premier Polyansky in the December 1972 issue of *Soviets of Workers Deputies* stands in marked contrast to those of Masharov and Kistanov and seems to reflect a more conservative point of view, one more concerned with maintaining the status quo in relations among the minority republics. Several references in Polyansky's article to the federal structure of the Soviet Union and the specific contention that the structure "fully meets the objective needs for the development of Soviet society" hints at his lack of enthusiasm for the kind of tinkering Kistanov had in mind. Polyansky gave due regard to the importance of achieving ever-closer unity of the Soviet peoples and bore down heavily on the concept of the Soviet economy as a single integrated complex, but he seemed to suggest that this could be achieved as much by mutual cooperation of the various national republics as by integration and the eventual blurring of all distinctions between the Soviet peoples. Furthermore, Polyansky twice referred to the 1936 constitution, once as the "fundamental law" of the land, possibly betraying some reservations about rewriting it.



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Certain aspects of Polyansky's article, specifically the unusual amount of attention he paid to the role of Ukrainians in national affairs, left the impression that he might have been making a bid for the support of Shelest's old constituency as well as of other national minority groups. By espousing a policy position different from that of the Belorussians, particularly his rival First Deputy Premier Mazurov, Polyansky may have hoped to shore up his weakened political position. In any event, his politicking on the nationality question did not save him from taking the blame for the harvest disaster—he was dropped as first deputy premier the following February and appointed USSR minister of agriculture—and may, in fact, have added to his difficulties.

Polyansky's seeming defense of the status quo in national relations would not have been inconsistent with his alleged support of some of the conservative Slavophile movements. Great Russians could be expected to resent the stress of integration as much as the non-Russian peoples. An ideological blunder that appeared several days after the 50th anniversary celebration in the generally conservative newspaper of the Russian Republic, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, provides further evidence that this point of view may reach into high places. In an editorial that opened with a faintly nationalistic reference to the "ancient but eternally young Kremlin," it was noted that the economy of the Soviet Union "is the sum total of the economies of the individual republics and that the largest share belongs to the RSFSR." The newspaper was forced to publish a correction the next day, saying that the Soviet economy is more than the sum of its parts.

Brezhnev, in his report on 21 December at the anniversary celebrations, gave official approval to the tougher line on minority relations, but he drew back from the more extreme positions presented by Masharov and Kistanov. His reluctance presumably was dictated by the very controversial nature of such positions and by his own sensitivity to the adverse political impact such a stand would have on his regional supporters.

Brezhnev echoed the line that the goal of equalizing the level of development of all republics had been achieved and that as a result decisions on regional development could now be based solely on economic criteria and on the national interest. In a seemingly contrary statement elsewhere in his report, however, he assured the national republics that their interests would be treated with "maximum concern." He announced a decision to revise the constitution, but provided no specifics as to the direction this revision would take.

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While it is doubtful from a political point of view that the regime will move very fast in making changes in the present structure of the national republics or in the relationships between the Soviet peoples, it is evident from events since the celebration that it is determined to play down the nationality factor. The decision to divide the country into seven large economic regions for long-term planning purposes, largely ignoring republic boundaries, is a case in point.

It is unlikely that nationalism will again, at least for some time, be the highly political issue that it was in recent years, when it was a battleground in the struggle between Brezhnev and his regional critics. Brezhnev's most powerful regional rivals have been removed from the scene, and his pre-eminent position in the leadership is virtually unchallenged for now. And the current crackdown on all manifestations of local nationalism will certainly have an impact. Nevertheless, the underlying trends that contributed to the growth of particularism within the republic administrations—the coming of age of native cadres and their renewed interest in their own national heritages—are still at work and may be hard to reverse. The regime's commitment to such long-term projects as the reworking of the constitution and the formulation of a long-range economic plan—projects that touch on sensitive nationality questions—ensure furthermore, that the nationality issue will continue to be a contentious one in Kremlin deliberations.

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